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Older Adults Outnumber Children in 11 States and Nearly Half of U.S. Counties

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JUNE 26, 2025 — The U.S. population age 65 and older rose by 3.1% (to 61.2 million) while the population under age 18 decreased by 0.2% (to 73.1 million) from 2023 to 2024, according to the Vintage 2024 Population Estimates released today by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The data show the population continued to age, with the share of the population age 65 and older steadily increasing from 12.4% in 2004 to 18.0% in 2024, and the share of children declining from 25.0% to 21.5%.

Ongoing growth among the older population, coupled with persistent annual declines in the population under age 18 has reduced the size difference between these two age groups from just over 20 million in 2020 to just below 12 million in 2024. From 2020 to 2024, the older population grew by 13.0%, significantly outpacing the 1.4% growth of working-age adults (ages 18 to 64), while the number of children declined by 1.7%.

"Children still outnumber older adults in the United States, despite a decline in births this decade," said Lauren Bowers, chief of the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Branch. "However, the gap is narrowing as baby boomers continue to age into their retirement years. In fact, the number of states and counties where older adults outnumber children is on the rise, especially in sparsely populated areas."

As recently as 2020, there were just three states where older adults outnumbered children: Maine, Vermont, and Florida. By 2024, this number had increased to 11, with Delaware, Hawaii, Montana, New Hampshire, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and West Virginia joining their ranks.

Similarly, from 2020 to 2024, the number of U.S. metro areas with more older adults than children increased from 58 to 112. This represents nearly 30% of the nation's 387 metro areas. Additionally, in 2024, three metro areas with at least 1 million people (Cleveland, OH; Providence-Warwick, RI-MA; and Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT) had more older people than younger people for the first time.

In 2020, 31.3% (or 983) of the nation's 3,144 counties had more older adults than children. This figure increased to almost 45% (1,411 counties) in 2024. In both years, most of these counties had small populations and were located outside of metro and micro areas.

Note: References to race and Hispanic origin compositions are for non-Hispanic race alone groups. Hispanic or Latino populations are of any race unless otherwise specified.

- Between 2023 and 2024, the Asian population grew the fastest (4.2%), followed by the Hispanic or Latino population (2.9%).
- From 2023 to 2024, the Hispanic or Latino population increased by 1.9 million; this gain was larger than the change for all other race and ethnicity groups combined.
- The White population was the only population that dropped, declining 0.1% between 2023 and 2024.
- While the Hispanic or Latino share of the U.S. total population reached 20% for the first time in 2024, only nine states and 457 counties were at least 20% Hispanic.
- The Asian population experienced its largest gains in California, followed by Texas; however, Texas' annual growth rate (6.9%) was substantially faster than California's (2.7%).

Today's release includes estimates of population by race, age, sex and Hispanic origin for the nation, states, metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas, and counties, and estimates of population by age and sex for Puerto Rico Commonwealth and its municipios.

This is the final release of the Vintage 2024 Population Estimates. The Census Bureau previously released total population estimates for the nation, states and Puerto Rico Commonwealth; metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas; counties and Puerto Rico municipios; and incorporated places and minor civil divisions. Components of population change and housing unit estimates for the nation, states and counties are also available on the Population and Housing Unit Estimates webpage.

This release does not incorporate data from the 2020 Modified Age and Race Census files.

The full release schedule for the Population Estimates Program can be found on the Census Bureau's website.

With each new release of annual estimates, the entire time series of estimates is revised for all years back to the date of the last census. All previously published (vintage) estimates are superseded and archived on the FTP2 site.

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